

MUSIC EDUCATION TOWARDS DEVELOPING ONE MALAYSIA: A RETROSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Music and art are two distinctive subjects which contribute towards the development of human interests in creating and upgrading human capital development. For us Malaysians, this subject is often considered as an option. Our new main vision foresees the development of human capabilities and unity among Malaysians and music education is seen as one of the way to prove to the public that music has the means to strengthen and develop human unity among different races. The increase of crimes committed in our society and individualistic attitude of our people today, show that something must be done to change the mentality of the people so as to be more loving and caring towards man, nature and of course the universe. From the research done, it has been proven that music education is able to develop the potential of the students and the prove that music is as equally important as other core subjects. Therefore, it is time to change the public's perception that music is important towards the development of human unity, integrity and not to mention in calculating good value in the future generation. Moreover it is our government objective to see that every Malaysian lives in One Malaysia. This paper will discuss the retrospectives of music education towards "Satu Malaysia, Rakyat didahulukan, Pencapaian diutamakan."

Introduction

One Malaysia is a new concept and has been announced by our new Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Tun Razak. From this concept there are eight elements towards the objective of one Malaysia. They are :

- Culture Of Excellence
- Perseverance
- Humility
- Acceptance
- Loyalty
- Meritocracy
- Education
- Integrity

Datuk Seri Najib (2009), describes the element of 1Malaysia "Once trust is developed, Malaysia will be the sum total of all races. We will not be moving as separate communities but as one Malaysia and we will be stronger. It will be a new Malaysia because will change our mindset because we trust and respect each other. I hope all will join me to bring Malaysia to greater heights."

There are eight elements to be described from the concept of one Malaysia and they as follow by:

Culture of Excellence

For us to transform Malaysia and take Malaysia to greater heights of success and achievement the one overarching value that will ensure that Malaysia is on the right trajectory is to make sure that we are imbued with the Culture of Excellence. Because if you have a set of values which would indicate that you have the Culture of Excellence, then everything else will flow and emanate from having this Culture of

Excellence. It is basically a work in progress. But you have to set into motion the kind of things that will actually lead to people realizing the importance of having this Culture of Excellence. For example, by introducing more and more the principle of meritocracy. Then you are stressing on the importance of performance, and performance is very much related to the Culture of Excellence.

Perseverance

Life is never easy. Any nation that life is kind of a linear curve that goes up and up all the way I think is a fallacy. One should expect that life is a series of ups and downs. But if you are someone who believes in hard work, and if you are totally dedicated, and if you persevere against all odds, then whenever you come across against any adversity, then you are able to ride through the storm and be able to put yourself back on track, you've got to appreciate and understand that there are times when you face difficulties. And it is the same with Malaysia as a nation, we've faced many crises before, whether it's the financial crisis, whether it's against the communists or against some other turbulent time in our history. But each time we have been able to weather the crisis and emerge stronger as a nation. But all that has been achieved because we've been able to put our minds to it. We've worked very hard and we've always been able to persevere against the odds and eventually prove the skeptics wrong.

Humility

Humility is an important trait to have. To be humble basically is an asset because in our society, especially in our traditional society, they tend to appreciate people who exhibit the trait of being humble. In Islam, it is the concept of 'Tawaddu', which is humility, translated as humility. As you know in the Malay society, one is expected not to be too showy, make sure that our behaviour will make the person feel comfortable, and not looking down on having a patronizing attitude towards them. So basically it is an asset. But being humble must not be a sign of weakness either. In certain societies, it tends to be misinterpreted as a sign of weakness. When you deal with outsiders, for example, there are times when you need to show your strength. You need to show your confidence, because when you are seen as being too humble in their perspective, it is deemed as a sign of weakness. So I think it is also quite situational, you must realize that within the Malaysian society it is an asset, but there are times when you are dealing with the world that you do need to show your strength and your success, but not in a heavy-handed manner.

Acceptance

There's quite a big difference between the two (tolerance and acceptance). I think when you say you tolerate, you don't quite like it, but you accept it because you have no choice. But if you talk in terms of acceptance, it indicates a state of mind that you are embracing something positively. I think it's important for us to migrate from this concept of mere tolerance to acceptance. Acceptance in the sense that you are ready to accept things. If you're willing to accept things, if you embrace things willingly, then I think your capacity to look at things in a more positive manner is much better than mere tolerance. That's important because you don't have any baggage and you're not weighed down by any negative preconceived notions and you're willing to look at the best the person can offer. This is what we require for Malaysia. We have to get the best of the Malays, the best of the Chinese, the best of the Indians, the best of the others and mold them together so that collectively we'll be much bigger than the sum of the individuals.

Loyalty

Loyalty is important because it is a cornerstone of trust. In any relationship, loyalty is important. As a friend, for example, you're loyal to your friend, because if you're loyal to your friend, it develops trust. A personal bond between you and the other person. Define loyalty as something which should not be taken

to the extreme where it's blind loyalty. The government administration, certainly one needs to be loyal to the leader. But one should also be loyal to the leader for as long as the leader is also loyal, in the sense that the leader performs, the leader is committed to his work, is dedicated. And loyalty does not mean that you cannot criticize, but of course you should criticize in the right manner, that there'll be a time and opportunity for them to offer some constructive views, even criticism, which it is necessary. But loyalty should also be coupled with ability and other considerations as well.

Meritocracy

Basically everybody knows what it means, this principle of meritocracy, but it cannot be applied in the purest sense, because there are times when you have to take into account certain other factors. For example, people who are disadvantaged, or people who live in rural areas, in estates, in new villages who are outside the mainstream of the more dynamic part of society. They would certainly need certain considerations. But by and large, meritocracy is not only a noble principle, but a necessary principle for us to propel Malaysia forward to greater heights, also it would be the necessary ingredient for us to maximize the potential of Malaysia.

Education

Education and knowledge are important prerequisites for any nation to succeed and throughout history we've realized that the only empires that have survived are the empires of the mind, particularly in the present context. Malaysia must have a society which places education and knowledge at the apex of everything. Malaysia are constrained by the fact that we have different [education] streams in the country. We don't have one stream, as such, we don't have one national stream. Even the national stream has been redefined to include the vernacular schools. It is both a strength as well as a problem and a challenge for us because we won't have the opportunity for Malaysians to grow up together through one school in a physical sense. So we will have the opportunity through music education to interact by looking at the curriculum and emphasizing on common values, so that even if we are physically separated, we are imbued with the same value system. Narmadeshwar Jha (1999), Tangore describe the importance of school in developing unity among different race stated "To build a nation, first build a school....". It points out that school played the important role in developing one Malaysia.

Integrity

It is important for any government to have the trust and the confidence of the rakyat. One of the best ways to get this trust and confidence is to be honest with the people. If the policies are not working, the government should intend to correct these mistakes. And the rakyat would appreciate that. Humans do make mistakes, but how you recover from your mistakes. Hopefully mistakes will be few, but most of the decisions will be correct and the decisions will be spot-on. The people are intelligent, they will appreciate honesty and truthfulness, engage and communicate with the government. The government should stick to the promise and deliver it.

The Scenario of Malaysian Music Education Primary and Secondary

Malaysia's music curriculum in primary school is known as Kurikulum Baru Sekolah Rendah (KBSR) and has been implemented since 1983 and in secondary school as Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah (KBSM) has been implemented since 1988. There is a reason to making music as a subject and for Malaysian this is the foundation to develop the philosophy of National Education in developing human intellectual, emotion, and physical.

The content of the music curriculums in primary school include the aspect of esthetic perception, musical experience, creative expression and appreciation artistic. Secondary music curriculums content added with traditional music, playing instruments and wide experience for student to develop their skill in music. These are divided into two, lower levels for Form One to Three and upper level are Form Four and Five.

In Primary school music is in the school time table and there are not many problems to face because music subject is available for student to learn from Standard One until Standard Six. Where as, learning music in secondary school is elective and students have to make a choice. Society's perception of music is not considered to be important because it is not an examination subject, less convinced with music's goodness, music learning does not require music education, parents do not encourage their children to attend music classes. Administration lack of supervision of the implementation and management of music in the schools, music classes held outside of school hours, time allocated for music classes being used for other subjects, lack of support for music, needed acknowledgement/ recognition for music teachers who often have to work above and beyond the call of duty, allocated funds for music spent elsewhere, ineffective selection of students into the music program in secondary schools, problematic practices, administrators who neither understand nor know the nature of music, and teachers who have been trained to teach music are assigned to teach other subjects and not music. But this is the common issues that has been discuss all over the country.

Music Education for Unity

Malaysia as a multiracial country, school been seen extremely institution in developing unity as describes Ho Seng Ong (1962):“It is accepted that education is not the only means available in the task of achieving national unity and solidarity in the plural community of Malaya, but it remains the most important single factor for integration in the racial, religious and culture complex of Malaya”.

Pitts (2002), mentioned that “musical learning was allied with the development of thinking, tolerance and other personal qualities; this is not to suggest that the musical outcomes of a degree course are incidental, but rather that they are closely connected with a broader experience of self-discovery and social growth”.

Hallam (2003) also describes “Music form part of the social fabric of our lives. Making music and sharing tis meanings within a culture or particular environment leads to cohesion and the strengthening of social unity”.

For Vygotsky (1971), “through participation in the arts people bring their most intimate and personal aspects.... into the circle of social life”.

From all these research we can't deny the fact that music could develop the student 's unity and for those who are still doubtful with this subject, this is the time to stand up and give full support towards one Malaysia through Music Education.

Music Education in Developing Human Capital

Perhaps the basic reason that every child must have an education in music is that music is a fabric of our society. U.S. Department of Education (1997) list the arts including music subject contribute significantly to children's intellect development. Texas Commission on Drug and Alcohol act January 1998 also describes, secondary student who participated in band or orchestra reported the lower set lifetime and all substances (alcohol, tobacco, and drug). Michael Greene, Recording Academy President and CEO at the 42nd Annual Grammy Awards, February 2000 describes music is a magical gift we must nourish and cultivate in our children, especially now as science proves that and education in the arts make better math and science students, enhance spatial in newborns and let's not forget that the art are a compelling solution to teen violence, drug and other.

When students become one of the communities they will apply what they have been learning in school period. In this critical time they have to survived in their own life otherwise they will troubled the community. Music education as we know developed student to emulate good value, and positive character to succeed in community and hence benefit the nation.

Success in School.

Success in society of course is predicated on success in school. Skills learned through the discipline of music, communication skills and cognitive skills are useful in every part of music curriculum. Through participation helps student learn to work effectively in school environment without resorting to violent behavior. Graziano, Petterson, and Shaw (1999), stated that a study of 237 second grade children used piano keyboard training and newly designed mathematics demonstrate improvement in math skills. The group scored 27 % higher proportional math test than children that used only math software. Catterall, J., Chapleau, R., and Iwanga, J. (1999), in an analysis on more than 25000 secondary school (NELS:88, National Education Longitudinal Survey) found that students who reach high levels of involvement in instrumental music over the middle and high school years show high level mathematics proficiency. Students with experience in music performance and music appreciation scored higher points in verbal and math than did the students with no arts participation. Phi Delta Kappan (1994), verified that 66% of music students who applied to medical school gain admission.

This means music students are always brilliant and I hope school managements will give greater attention to music students in future and to make sure that the selected students must be bright and intelligent with right aptitude to be placed in music class .

Success in Developing Intelligence

Success in school and in society depends on array of abilities. This burgeoning range of data long established base of anecdotal knowledge to the effect that music education makes kid smart and especially compelling, however is a combination of tightly controlled behavioral studies groundbreaking neurological research that show how music actively contribute to brain.

Rauscher, Shaw, Levine, Wright, Dennis, and Newcomb, (1997) in their research exploring the link between music and intelligence reported that music trainers superior to computer instruction and enhancing children in learning math and science. Norman (2000) pianist and non –musicians of the same age are required to perform complex sequence of finger movements. Their brains were scanned by “f MRI” (functional magnetic resource imaging) which detects the activity levels of brain nonmusician were able to make the movement as correctly as the pianists but less active at making skill movement. These findings show that musical training can enhance brain. Costa-Giomi. E (1999) found that pattern recognition and mental representation scores significantly for students given piano instruction over three year period.

Success in Life

Each of us wants our children to achieve success in employment and success in social structure. Participation in music during the formative school years bring benefits to student may be in their spiritual, physical or psychological development. Frederick Tims (1999) music makes the elderly healthier. From the finding results music develop hormones in the immune system and decrease stress. Another individual who loves music in his schooling is former President of United States, Bill Clinton who said music is about communication, creativity and cooperation and by studying music in school the opportunity to build on these skills, enrich their lives and experience the world from perspective. The United States top business executives agree that music and art education can help American education

and prepare workers for the 21's century. Studying music and art elevates children's education , expands student and teaches to appreciate the wonder of life.

Music Education in Developing Creativity

The age of industry, technology, and even information, is past. This is the age of the creative entrepreneur, and it requires new criteria for educating our children. As Richard Florida has told us in his ground-breaking book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, we are in a new age where the most important element in our development is creativity, where ideas and original approaches to problems in all professions are the keys to success. It's time for our education system to shake the dust off and play catch-up. Richard Florida (2002), "we are in a new age where the most important element in our development is creativity where idea and original approaches to problem in all professions is the key to success". According to Hollander (1991) "Children are born wildly creative that is who they are. Their vision, imagination, intuition, dream mythology and capacity to play, are all fully formed. They are born artists: dancers who write the rhythmically; musicians--singing intervals long before they speak language. They are in their deepest selves, a priori, being the full self-expression of the artist. That is who they are." Runco (2004), describes " by encouraging creativity we are encouraging a departure from society's existing norms and value "

Conclusion

Music Education is facing many critical issues and is still strong to compete with other subjects in Malaysia Curriculum. The music curriculum is the frame and guide line to teach music, but the most important reason is how music educators play their role to make music subject a reliable subject to be taught in every school in Malaysia. The challenge for the implementation of music in Malaysia curriculum is on the music educators hands for their hard works and undaunted spirit to develop subject through teaching and instructing where ever they may be in our country. Music plays a central role in the education needed for this new age, because they are all about creativity. Being a performance art, music teaches children how to cooperate within a larger system, which orchestra, band and choral training require. The earlier we start children in music and the more we integrate music into the overall fabric of our schools, the better we will prepare our young for a successful and satisfying life. And we will all benefit, regardless of age, because we will be creating a richer, and safer, society. 8 Values of 1Malaysia A Culture of Excellence, Perseverance, Humility, Acceptance, Loyalty, Meritocracy, Education, and Integrity are paramount in our collective efforts to add value to Malaysia as a developing nation.

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